RECONCILIATION.

SPEECH

OF

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,

AT

AUBURN, MAY 22, 1866,

ON

THE QUESTION OF RECONCILIATION.

WASHINGTON:
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Mr. SEWARD addressed an immense meeting at Corning Hall on Tuesday evening. The following is a copy of his Address:

MY GOOD FRIENDS: Your kind importunity will not avail me as an excuse for speaking, if I ought to keep silence. Perhaps, however, the solicitude which pervades the country may justify us all in conversing upon political questions in a candid and patriotic spirit.

We were together here in October last. The national condition has undergone some material changes since that time. We were then on the verge of a series of elections throughout the States. The leaders who so pertinaciously claim to be democratic, organized with their customary machinery and orations. They had wisely ceased to denounce as a failure the war for the Union, which had at last become a glorious success. They thought to undermine the distinctive party of the Union by affecting a new-born admiration of its chief, Andrew Johnson. They seemed anxious to prove their devotion superior to ours by committing themselves to support him as a candidate for the Presidency in 1868. They inscribed our Administration mottoes of reconciliation upon their newly-wrought banner, and reorganizing their straggling lines as well as they so hastily could, they vehemently charged onward for a partisan, not a patriotic victory.

What led the Democratic leaders to make this change was the striking—I may call it, the marvellous phenomenon, which was just then exhibited in the scene of the recent rebellion. The whole disloyal community in that blighted and desolated region, accepting the conditions of partial amnesty, and the invitations to returning allegiance which were proclaimed by the Administration, all at once renounced the principles, practices, and policy of secession and disunion.

They tendered us a new covenant of loyalty, sealed with their oaths, and brought forward with alacrity the remains of their long-cherished institution of slavery, and cheerfully threw them to be burned upon the Constitutional altar which they had so newly restored.

These unexpected changes in the attitude of political adversaries, once so obstinate, naturally enough excited suspicions, jealousies, and apprehensions among loyal and tried Union men. It was the old case of William of Orange, who, having in civil war put down the Tories, afterwards found it necessary to concede to repenting Jacobites and Papists the rights of citizenship. It is the case which has ever occurred, and which evermore must occur at the end of a successful resistance to rebellion. How *could* Democrats and Rebels be converted to the support of a triumphant Union Administration? This was the question everywhere put by the zealous leaders of the Union party. It was at that moment that I answered this question by asking others, viz: How *could* Democrats and Rebels avoid being converted? Is it not their conversion that you contended for and that you now desire? I expressed the opinion that the condition of peace, with its new responsibilities, must thenceforth be in good faith accepted. I advised prompt and complete reconciliation with the restoration, at once, of the Constitutional symmetry of the Union. Rejecting the ungenerous suspicion that the Rebels and their Democratic abettors were only changing their political strategy with traitorous purposes, I argued that with few and marked exceptions they were now to be received and accepted as fellow-citizens and brethren. I urged that this could be safely done if only the

tried friends of the Administration, remaining united and harmonious, and thus retaining their justly-acquired prestige, should themselves promptly and magnanimously secure to the nation the enjoyments of ardently desired peace, and indispensably required prosperity.

For a time the friends of the Union acted upon that policy. The elections everywhere resulted in the defeat and overthrow of the Democratic organization, and placed the Administration of Andrew Johnson beyond the reach of danger at home or abroad.

The work of reconciliation has outrun expectation. Indeed, it has never had a parallel in human affairs. With internal commotions and disturbances less serious than those which sometimes attend popular elections in every free country in a time of profound peace, the heretofore disloyal people of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, and Texas, successively, nay, almost simultaneously, assembled and adopted new constitutions in conformity with the Constitution of the United States. They upturned rebellion, with all its far-spreading roots, and all its poisonous fruits, and they accepted and ratified the then pending Congressional amendment of the Constitution of the United States, which abolished slavery then, henceforth, and forever. The people of those States have at the same time chosen for themselves, by free and uncontrolled suffrage, Governors, Legislatures, Judiciaries, and Municipal authorities. Between the Federal Government and these restored and reorganized State Governments there exists now a more complete and practical harmony than has ever before prevailed between the Union and so many of its members since it was first established.

Within the same time the Executive Department of the United States has resumed its functions among the people of those formerly disloyal States. The State Department speaks for them with their free consent, to Principalities and Powers; the Treasury collects the national imposts and taxes there; the War Department distributes its forces whenever and wherever it seems necessary or expedient, to guarantee peace between inveterate but fast-expiring factions; the

Navy of the United States rides freely in all their reopened ports and harbors; the Post Office circulates through every vein and artery there the knowledge which is the revivifying blood of a United Republic; the Interior Department pays pensions, protects Indians, sells lands, and defrays the expenses of judicial administration; the Attorney General prosecutes traitors and other disturbers of the peace there before Federal courts.

All this has been done with the active concurrence of the people of those States absolutely free from military control, while the army of the United States, instead of being increased, has been reduced from a million and a half of men to some sixty or eighty thousand. The expenses of the Federal Government have been reduced from a million and a half a day to a sum less than the daily receipts of the Treasury; and the great, but in every sense, sacred debt of the Union is already perceptibly diminished. Foreign nations have desisted from intervention and assumed an attitude of conciliation and friendship. The people of the lately disloyal States desiring to pass the last stage of restoration as speedily as possible, have chosen Senators to represent them in the Senate, and members to answer for them in the House of Representatives. Those Representatives are in daily waiting at the Capitol. Throughout the loyal States industry is more vigorous and effective than ever before. In the lately disloyal States, capital and labor, combining and coöperating under a free contract system, which, to them, is altogether new, are beginning with success to obliterate the tracks of ruin and devastation. I do not say that cavil and criticism can find no dark shades with which to darken this pleasing picture. Irregularities deform every human work, and the telescope reveals to us dark spots even upon the surface of the glowing sun.

In view of this rapid progress of peace and reconciliation we might well expect to find the country, if not contented, yet cheerful and hopeful, as well as grateful to Almighty God. Such, indeed, I conceive to be the real state of the public mind. Many citizens, however, seem unprepared to accept the improved situation of affairs.

Political zeal gives up reluctantly its contests over the dead past,

and stretches morbidly forward to catch the omens of an uncertain future. This habit of apprehension is natural enough, and has its cautionary uses; but on the other hand conscience, reason, and judgment are the only practical guides of human conduct. We are required by some to discard this guidance, and to believe that the country, North and South, East and West, is in a paroxysm of turbulent excitement, menacing, near or remote, some new and fearful revolution. I think that all these fears are born in misapprehension and unintentional exaggeration.

The feature of affairs which disturbs the public mind is a supposed divergence between the President and the Representatives in Congress of the National Union party, from which he and they have derived their respective, but coördinate powers. I agree that it is altogether easier, and altogether more desirable, that the work of reconciliation so happily begun, and so successfully prosecuted heretofore, shall be continued and ended under the auspices of the National Union party, and of the President and Congress as the representatives of that party. I agree, therefore, that it would be a sad misfortune, if divergence between the President and Congress should work a decline and downfall of the National Union party. It is dear to me, for I am identified with its rapid rise, its majestic progress, and its glorious work. Both the President and Congress might well expect to be equally involved in the calamity which should dismiss the Union party from the National councils, and to see with mortification the great responsibilities to which the party had in that case proved itself unequal, assumed and discharged by some new and yet undeveloped political organization. But President, Congress, Statesmen, and Parties are of no real account in my estimation when weighed against the national life. The national life lately hung on the issue of Victory won in War. It now hangs on the issue of Reconciliation in Peace.

The nation must live; it must live forever, whether it receive the needed care in any emergency at the hands of one President, Congress, and Party, or at the hands of another. I reasoned in this way about the triumph of the war. I reason in the same way now

in regard to reconciliation and peace. I expect that a year hence I shall be found to have been right at this time, as I am now admitted to have been right one year, two years, three years ago. I do not think, however, that there is any necessity for separation between the President, the Congress, and the party of the Union.

I admit that the jealousies and suspicions of the last summer were only temporarily allayed, not extinguished, by the elections of November. They have been sedulously cherished and increased until they have revealed themselves in inflammatory debates in the press and popular assemblies. I admit that the National Union party in Congress has as yet been unable either to accept or reject the counsels of the President. A wide and enduring separation cannot, however, be made between Congress and the President without having for its groove a serious difference upon some cardinal political question.

At this point it will be well to settle for ourselves what it is that we are desiring to see effected by the President and Congress. We all agree that we desire and seek just what the nation needs at the present juncture. We cannot accept less than this, because it would leave us still, if not a dislocated, at least a disturbed and distracted country. We cannot require more, because, even if more were desirable, yet that more is debatable, and must be the study and the work, not of ourselves at this particular period, but of ourselves or our successors hereafter. What, then, does the country actually need? Most persons say, reconstruction. I think it needs no such thing. The country is constructed already. It was constructed in 1787. As then constructed it was a Union of thirteen, since multiplied to thirty-six, free, equal, separate, self-acting, and, in regard to internal affairs, self-governing States. We do not reconstruct that which has not been destroyed. There has, indeed, been an attempt at destruction, but it has failed. The political system of 1787, constructed by our forefathers, stands now firm, compact, complete, and perfect, just as it came from the builders' hands. It was constructed, not for eighty years only, nor yet for a time of peace only, nor yet for a

period of civil war only, but for all alternating conditions of peace and war, and for all ages and for all time.

Others say what the country needs is restoration of the autonomy of the nation. I think it needs no such thing. We have passed that point. The Southern States during four years were deranged and disorganized equally in their internal structure, and in their Constitutional relations to the Union. They have, however, been since that time reorganized. Their organic powers and functions have been renewed, and they have resumed their Constitutional relations of allegiance to the Union.

What, then, does the nation need? It needs just what I have dwelt upon so much and so earnestly in these remarks; it needs reconciliation, and just now needs nothing more. It needs, moreover, only a very little of this. It needs a reconciliation between the Senators of the United States who are now acting, and those Senators who, being loyal and qualified for membership of the Senate, have been already, or may hereafter be elected by the people of the several States which were lately involved in the rebellion. It needs a reconciliation of the same kind between the members of the House of Representatives who are now acting and loyal members already elected, or to be elected by the people in the same beforementioned States. It needs just this Congressional reconciliation, and nothing more. Of course I recognize the fact that the separation which exists between the acting Senators and acting Representatives, and those loyal Senators and Representatives who are already, or may hereafter be elected in the Southern States, is understood to indicate a corresponding alienation between the constituencies of those parties respectively; but this does not affect the view I have taken of the case. It only shows that what is wanted, is reconciliation between the alienated constituencies as well as between separated representatives. Let the reconciliation be made first either in Congress or in any of the constituencies, and it will follow in the other place immediately.

The country exhibits at this moment this extraordinary and interesting phenomenon: a nation of States not only kindred, but also

allied, yet rival and hostile to each other. For such a condition, mutual reconciliation is the only practical remedy. We are prepared now to ask: "What hinders the application of that remedy in the legislative councils."

The President's position is absolutely taken, well defined and universally understood. It is this, namely: That so far and so fast as the unrepresented States present themselves in a loyal attitude, by representatives unquestionably loyal, they are entitled to representation in Congress equally with all other States, and just as well as if there had been no rebellion.

The Representatives of the National Union party in Congress do not yet agree with the President, but I think they differ only in regard to non-essentials. Some are understood to insist that the people of no State ought to reserve the right of secession, or disunion. The President says exactly the same thing: A State that should claim to reserve a right of secession could not be loyal. Others contend that after rebellion, a State ought not to be accepted which insists upon, or admits the validity of the debts of the rebellion. The President says exactly the same thing: A State that should insist upon the validity of such debts could not be loyal.

Others argue that as a consequence of the abolition of slavery, a change of the basis of representation has become desirable and necessary. This can be done only by amending the Constitution of the United States. While Congress are yet unable to agree among themselves upon the form of such an amendment, the President says, "let us amend the Constitution so as to proportion representation according to suffrage."

These seem to me to be the only essentials of reconciliation. Two of them are already secured by the unrepresented States in their Constitutions. The third is a work of time, requiring the action of three-fourths of the States by amendment of the Constitution. Why, then, the delay of reconciliation by Congress when they agree upon essentials?

With some, it may be a matter of temper. They ask why should Congress be expected to agree with the President upon his plan

rather than he be expected to agree with Congress upon a plan to be originated by them? I answer, because the President has a plan, and Congress have as yet proposed none, at least, none that is immediately practicable. But in truth it is not a question which of the two, the President or Congress, has devised, or shall devise, a plan of reconciliation. Neither the President nor Congress could arbitrarily devise and project one in this case.

We speak habitually, and even flippantly, of the policy which the President supports, as if it were a plan that has been conceived and framed in his own brain. It is no such thing. It is a plan which grew up, as Topsy grew, out of the unavoidable, predestined change from war to peace. What was required was a form of reconciliation that should be reasonably acceptable to both parties, while it should harmonize with returning loyalty and renewed allegiance in the States which were involved in the rebellion, and should at the same time secure to all parties their exact Constitutional rights. The present plan, like our republican system of government, was devised by nobody in particular, but it presented itself, at once, to the anxious thoughts of all parties concerned. The Constitution prescribes its chief details. The other portions revealed themselves as inferior mechanism to the engineer to bring the device into successful movement. Congress is to be expected, therefore, to concur with the President, not in adopting a plan which he has projected, but in accepting with him actually existing overtures of reconciliation in the form in which they have occurred. I think that the proceedings of Congress hitherto, indicate, not an ultimate disagreement and failure, but only a procrastination, which to the impatient is inconvenient, and to the timid alarming. We are to remember, however, the Constitutional checks of legislation. Indeed, Congress is designedly constituted so that it shall not too hastily decide upon any measure. Hence, time is always found to be a necessary condition of safe legislation. The Senate, counting only its actual members, consists of fifty persons. They come from twenty-five different States, and, individually, they are exponents of at least two very divergent parties, and of multiplied differences of popular opinion

prevailing in each of these parties. The House of Representatives, while it is more numerous, is constituted upon the same principle. No measure can be finally adopted by Congress until it has obtained a majority of voices in each House, sitting and discussing it in different chambers. The sentiments, feelings, jealousies, prejudices, and ambitions of their constituents, necessarily and justly influence, retard, and modify their deliberations and their votes. To one who should be a stranger to our system, it must seem more wonderful that Congress ever agree upon any deeply exciting measure, than it would seem if they should fail to agree upon a plan of reconciliation between constituencies lately so widely divided in civil war. Delay in any enterprise inevitably begets new difficulties and embarrassments.

There are some partisans among us, misguided, I think, although honest, who deprecate an easy and speedy reconciliation. One class of these partisans think that some conditions, or forms of reconciliation, other than those upon which the public attention is fixed, are possible, essential, and desirable. They advise Congress to demand a concession by the lately disloyal States of a protracted disfranchisement of all persons who have been involved in the rebellion. On the contrary, there can be no reconciliation at all without amnesty in large measure. Even the Divine Government does not ask sinners to repent without promising them forgiveness and restoration. The Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land, does not authorize so sweeping a disfranchisement. The class I speak of reply to these arguments that the rebels cast off the Constitution and became insolent belligerents; that, therefore, they are now not citizens, but conquered enemies. The advocates of reconciliation rejoin, that although the Constitution was in many of its provisions displaced, or suspended in the disloyal States, by the war, yet that it necessarily regains its absolute authority on the return of peace. It takes time to settle this new dispute.

Another class of partisans object that the President ought not to have recognized the plan of reconciliation, but, on the other hand, that he ought to have left it exclusively to the Legislative depart-

ment. It belongs, however, to the Executive to conduct war with the means furnished by Congress, and with the exercise of all military powers not denied by the Constitution and the laws of nations. The tender of amnesty and pardon by the President, and his invitation to the rebels to return to their constitutional relations, like the proclamation against slavery, were not forbidden by any law of Congress, or by the laws of nations. Congress, nevertheless, retain and reserve all necessary powers over the question of reconciliation in their reserved and indefeasible right to determine the qualifications of members elected to the respective Houses.

Another class of these partisans insist that Congress shall secure the right of suffrage for the African race in the States lately involved in the rebellion. Six months have been, perhaps, not unprofitably spent in bringing Congress to accept the fact that the subject of African suffrage has only begun now to be debated with no prospect that the assent of a constitutional number of States to an amendment of the Constitution to that effect could be in any way secured through any form of action which Congress could adopt at the present time.

A fourth class of these partisans are so apprehensive of renewed disloyalty in the Southern States, that they would prefer to disfranchise all the people of those States and hold them in the condition of subjugated Provinces and Territories for an indefinite future, rather than to accept reconciliation on any terms. Six months' reflection has not been unwisely bestowed by Congress in reaching the conclusion that not only would Territorial or Provincial Government in one-fourth, or one-third of the States be more impracticable in itself, and more inconsistent with the Constitution than any other form of Government, but that such Provincial or Territorial Government is, of all others, most thoroughly incompatible with the existence even of the Federal Union itself.

It was not until after all these topics were exhausted that a Committee of Congress reached the point at which they made, by implication, the confession, that rather than agree with the President, it would be expedient and proper at present to shuffle off the question

of reconciliation altogether. Such, I understand to be the effect of what is called the "Third Section," in the first article of the Reconstruction Committee's Report, and their supplemental bill. They do not, however, in so many words, insist that reconciliation shall be forever denied, nor even that it shall be indefinitely postponed. They have reason for this forbearance. Indefinite postponement in Congressional action is equivalent to absolute rejection. Pressed by this difficulty they content themselves with recommending that Representatives in Congress, and in the electoral colleges, shall only be admitted upon impracticable conditions, and in every case that those representatives shall be excluded until after 1870. But, on the other hand, this Congress must adjourn sometime this year, and must cease to exist in 1868, and then be succeeded by another Congress.

It is seen at once, therefore, that the postponement of reconciliation by this Congress at its present session until 1870 is equivalent to a rejection, so far as their own action is concerned, unless that being enlightened by the autumnal elections they shall conclude to review and reverse their proceedings next winter.

To this complexion, then, the question of reconciliation in Congress has come; or if it has not already come to this complexion, it must come before the present Congress shall expire. Either loyal representatives, coming from States that stand in an attitude of loyalty to the Union, must be now admitted, or we have not only no reconciliation, but even no prospect of reconciliation, except through an appeal to the people in future popular elections. Upon such a question we may patiently and hopefully await the final decision of Congress. No Congress, I think, could be inconsiderate enough to leave the question in that fearful shape. A failure of reconciliation for an indefinite period would and could be nothing less than a practical abandonment of the nation to the rebellion. It would be disunion and revolution. It would be Mexican or French anarchy. The people of the United States justly fear, abhor, and detest disunion, revolution, and anarchy. Neither hope nor fear, nor anger, nor revenge, nor ambition, nor height, nor depth, nor any

other creature, can separate them from this inherent, life-saving love of Union. The experience of the war has convinced the rebels of this truth. It has convinced the whole outside world, and it will not fail in due time to convince all the people of the loyal States, and all their loyal representatives in Congress, of the same great truth.

I can now speak of another misguided class, who love turbulence and willingly sow the seeds of discord. These represent to the loyal Union people, that the President has been, and is, unfaithful to his party, and, of course, as they allege, unfaithful to cardinal principles of public policy which that party cherishes.

First, Congress proposed a bill to enlarge and continue the bureau which was established during the war for the protection of freedmen or emancipated slaves. The President withheld his assent from the bill. It was immediately argued that the President proposed with unnecessary inhumanity and cruelty to abandon the freedmen to oppression and persecution by their former masters, and thus to render possible the restoration of slavery. The result of the discussion, however, established in the public mind a clear conviction that slavery can never in any case be renewed in this or any other Christian country; that the Freedmen's Bureau, in a state of peace, is not only unconstitutional, but that it is desirable and necessary only as a temporary measure during the civil war, and the transition from war to peace; that its organization, which was adequate during the war, is consequently competent during the transition from war to peace, and that it has with his hearty coöperation a legal duration for one year for all just, necessary, and practical purposes.

The passage of the so-called "Civil Rights Bill" constitutes a second incident which the advocates of discord seek to improve. Besides the emancipation of the slaves, and the complete abolition of slavery, a majority of Congress deemed it necessary, constitutional, and wise to pass some law to counteract supposed or apprehended legislation in the lately disloyal States, by which those States might discriminate between white and colored citizens. The bill consists of two parts—one which declares that all persons who are born in

the United States, and owe allegiance to no foreign power, are citizens without discrimination of race or color; another, which confers powers upon United States courts, and civil and military officers, to oppose, and arbitrarily annul and defeat, legislative and judicial proceedings of the States in the administration of justice, where the equal rights of a particular class of persons are alleged to be invaded.

The President withheld his approval from the first part of this law upon the grounds that it was unnecessary, and in his judgment an abstraction, open to misconstruction. He disapproved of the second part of the law because it was not merely incongruous, but inconsistent with the rights and powers which the Constitution necessarily and wisely leaves to be exercised by the several States. But he at the same time offered to concur with Congress in any constitutional measure which should be required for the protection of freedmen, in harmony with the fundamental principles of the Constitution of the United States. Congress adhered to its bill, and it became a law. The President could not forget—I am sure I never shall forget, the pestilential fruits of the fugitive slave law, and the Dred Scott decision. Their provisions were invidious and onerous, because they unnecessarily arrayed Federal courts and officers in conflict with the authorities of the States upon questions of individual rights of property and liberty. There is no soundness at all in our political system, if the personal or civil rights of each member of the State, white or black, free born or emancipated, native born or naturalized, are not more secure under the administration of State government than they could be under the administration of the National Government. Harmony is essential to Union, but harmony is impossible if the citizens of every State are not left free from unconstitutional intervention in their civil rights by the Federal Government.

The civil rights bill retaliates upon the late slaveholding States now, after slavery has ceased to exist, the very aggression, which, through the fugitive slave law, the Slave States committed upon the Free States. I, for one, am not proposing now or ever to carry sectional ambitions into the field of National legislation. The President, nevertheless, acquiesces in the law of Congress. How, then,

shall he be condemned for infidelity to his political principles or associations?

The Colorado case is a third incident which the discordant seek to turn to their advantage. Five years ago Congress, in view of the defection of the eleven States which were carried into the rebellion, authorized the people of Colorado, then understood to be 40,000 in number, to form a Constitution for a State. The people, by a majority of three to one, refused to accept the privilege. Last year, when the people were reduced by emigration to two-thirds of their former number, a party, without any legal authority, held an irregular election, and obtained a majority of 135 out of less than 6,000 votes for accepting the privilege of a State Government, which they had rejected a year before. Congress passed a bill which proposed their admission into the Union. The President withheld his approval upon the ground that the few inhabitants of Colorado Territory are already exercising all the necessary and beneficent powers of self-government, that the late irregular election furnishes only equivocal proof of their desire to come into the Union, and that, in principle, communities having less than one-fourth of the population required by law for the election of one member of Congress, ought not, without some extraordinary reason, to be admitted to an equality of political power with the States which have a population four times, five times, ten times, or one hundred times greater. The dissent by the President from the action of Congress, while it was clearly within the province of the Executive Department, was at the same time just as well considered, and as loyal as the action of Congress in passing the bill.

In two of the instances mentioned, Congress, according to the forms of the Constitution itself, have, or at least seem to have, surrendered, their own convictions, and accepted those of the President. Let me say now that all three of these measures, in which the President declined to concur with Congress are purely extraneous incidents, and have no necessary or real bearing upon the question of reconciliation.

I think it may now be assumed that the President has neither

sought, nor made, nor accepted any occasion for disagreeing from Congress, and that, so far as the purely incidental legislation to which I have referred is concerned, he is as loyal to the principles of the Union party and to the national cause, as Congress, or any of the members can claim to be.

The sowers of discord further insist that the representatives who have come from the unrepresented States are actually disloyal. It is agreed on all hands that disloyal representatives ought not to be in any case admitted. Congress, however, has the Constitutional right and power to exclude all such representatives not only from the States unrepresented, but from any other State. When, therefore, a Senator or Representative from one of the unrepresented States presents his credentials to the body to which he has been elected, he offers himself, as any other member does, for a trial upon the question of his loyalty and allegiance. It belongs to Congress to prescribe the form of the trial, and the evidence of loyalty it will demand. In accordance with this principle, and in view of exactly this occasion, Congress has, heretofore, established two test oaths—one, a general oath of fidelity and allegiance; the other a special one, disavowing and repudiating all connection with disunion or rebellion. These laws are general; they require every every member to subscribe to them.

They are required to be presented to every claimant to a seat, and yet, the members from Tennessee and Arkansas have been six months asking to have these oaths tendered to them for their subscription, and have been denied. It would seem that they could be justly denied only on the ground that in subscribing to the oaths, the claimants would commit a fraud and a perjury. Not only is there a legal presumption to the contrary, but every intelligent man in the community admits the proved loyalty, fidelity, and constancy of all the members who have come from Tennessee and from Arkansas.

The apology for the denial is that although the members now chosen are loyal, yet that they might become disloyal after being admitted.

Is it necessary to say that the same subterfuge may be equally

resorted to in the case of every other member of Congress? The suspicion is illogical, and unwarranted by the Constitution; and even if it were both Constitutional and logical, Congress has still the reserved but absolute power to expel the member, whenever he shall have become unfaithful, or falter in his allegiance.

The advocates of dissension pressed by these facts, resort to the argument that although it is true that the Representatives who have come from Tennessee and Arkansas are loyal, and can meet conscientiously and legally every test which Congress has prescribed or can prescribe, and although they may be expected to remain loyal themselves, yet that among those who have come from the other unrepresented States, there are persons who cannot take the test oaths, and are, therefore, properly held to be disloyal. The reply is obvious. Let all disloyal claimants from other States be rejected, but in any case admit the loyal representatives of Tennessee and Arkansas. Still, Congress exclude the loyal, grouping them in one indiscriminate mass with the disloyal. This course of the opposition has failed to be satisfactory, and, therefore, new arguments must be found. One of these is that although the present representatives are loyal, the terms for which they were elected will some day expire; and they may be followed by disloyal successors. The same argument would affect every seat in both Houses of Congress, because, although the Constitutional presumption in favor of loyalty in the several States always remains good, yet no one can absolutely guarantee that any one State, or district in the United States, may not at some future time send a disloyal representative.

We all see clearly that the question is not of what is past, nor yet of what is future. Judged by any standard of patriotism and loyalty that the whole Congress could accept, some districts in every State, and many of the States have at times heretofore, suffered themselves to be represented by disloyal men, and any one or all of them may consent to be represented by disloyal men hereafter. The only sure way to guard against this imaginary danger would be to dispense with Congress altogether. Thus the advocates of dis-

sension seem to arrive at the conclusion that our entire system of Republican Government is an absurd failure.

What, then, is my conclusion? It is one that will at least be admitted to harmonize with my past life. I am hopeful, hopeful of the President, hopeful of the Congress, hopeful of the National Union Party, hopeful of the Democratic Party, hopeful of the represented States, hopeful of the unrepresented States—above all, hopeful of the whole people, and hopeful of the continued favor of Almighty God.

When I shall return here from the field of public service, and shall have come to mingle once more in your quiet and peaceful pursuits, I desire and hope then to be able to look with renewed affection and pride upon our beloved country. I hope that then while I remember how fearfully within our own time she has been beset, beseiged, and bested, I shall nevertheless be able to say to all her enemies at home, as well as abroad—

"Compass her walls in solemn pomp,
Your eyes quite round her cast,
Count all her towers, and see if there
You find one stone displaced."